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Fifty-fifth year

Identical letters dated 19 May 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you, enclosed herewith, the communiqué issued on today's date by the office of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity on the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have it circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 31, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Abdallah **Baali**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the identical letters dated 19 May 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

Communiqué from the office of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity on the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea

It is with deep concern that the office of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) notes the continuation of fierce fighting between Ethiopia and Eritrea, at the cost of thousands of lives within the ranks of the two fraternal peoples, despite the repeated calls of OAU and many of the continent's leaders for an immediate ceasefire and the resumption of negotiations between the two parties.

At the same time, the office of the current Chairman notes with satisfaction resolutions 1297 (2000), of 12 May, and 1298 (2000), of 17 May, in which the United Nations Security Council calls for an immediate cessation of all military action and the reconvening without preconditions of indirect talks under OAU auspices.

Moreover, the office of the current Chairman takes note with hope of the position recently conveyed to it by the Government of Eritrea, which states its willingness to end the fighting and return to negotiations in Algiers under OAU leadership, with a view to finalizing the consolidated technical arrangements as envisaged at the previous meeting held at the beginning of this month.

It was also with the same hope that the office of the current Chairman took note of the willingness expressed by the Government of Ethiopia to see the indirect negotiations reconvene.

In the light of these encouraging developments, the office of the current Chairman appeals urgently to the two parties for an immediate and mutual halt to the fighting and invites them to take part, as soon as possible, in a new meeting to be held in Algiers under the leadership of its personal envoy, so that they can proceed, without preconditions, to finalize the consolidated technical arrangements in order to initiate the process of implementing the Framework Agreement and the Modalities already agreed on by the two parties.

The office of the current Chairman, which declares its willingess to organize the immediate reconvening of the indirect talks, awaits an urgent and positive response from Eritrea and Ethiopia to this appeal in order to put an end to the fratricidal bloodshed and again provide a new opportunity for the lasting restoration of peace.

This new tragedy, in a region that has been spared very little by nature in the way of human suffering — particularly the rampant hunger there — challenges every conscience in the world, and appeals to what is most sacred in its wisdom, and the values in which the leaders of Eritrea and Ethiopia believe as Africans and as human beings, so that immediately, and without procrastination on either side, a courageous, responsible and historic decision may be taken to end the war and return promptly to the negotiating table. Africa bears witness and the international community is watching these developments.